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R 191357Z JUL 06
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
TO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHCH/AMEMBASSY CHISINAU
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L HELSINKI 000682

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TAGS: [OSCE](#) [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [RS](#) [MD](#) [FI](#)
SUBJECT: FINLAND/EU TROUBLED BY TRANSNISTRIA INDEPENDENCE
REFERENDUM; WILL RAISE CONCERNS INFORMALLY WITH RUSSIA

REF: STATE 115371

CLASSIFIED BY: POLCHIEF GREGORY THOME FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: THE FINNISH EU PRESIDENCY SHARES THE US

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CONCERN THAT TRANSNISTRIA'S PROPOSED INDEPENDENCE
REFERENDUM CANNOT BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY OR TREATED AS
LEGITIMATE. THE GOF FEARS RUSSIA MAY ULTIMATELY SUPPORT
THE REFERENDUM'S RESULTS, EVEN THOUGH DOING SO WILL
UNDERMINE MOSCOW'S STATED SUPPORT OF OSCE-AGREED
UNDERSTANDINGS ON BORDER INTEGRITY; ITS PUBLIC DENIALS
OF TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS IN TRANSNISTRIA; AND EVEN,
TANGENTIALLY, ITS ARGUMENTS AGAINST KOSOVOS
INDEPENDENCE. THE FINNS AND THE COUNCIL HAVE TACITLY
AGREED THAT THE EU SHOULD NOT FORMALLY DEMARCHE MOSCOW
ON THE REFERENDUM; RATHER, THE EU AND THE FINNS WILL
CONTINUE TO REMIND THE GOR OF THE AWKWARD POSITION IT
RISKS PUTTING ITSELF IN AS PART OF A SERIES OF OTHER
DISCUSSIONS (AS THEY DID AT THE JULY 14 PSC TROIKA).
END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) POLCHIEF DELIVERED SUBJECT DEMARCHE TO TUULA
YRJOLA, COUNSELOR FOR BELORUS, UKRAINE AND MOLDOVA IN
THE FINNISH MFA'S UNIT FOR EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL
ASIA. YRJOLA SAID THAT THE GOF, BOTH NATIONALLY AND IN

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ITS CAPACITY AS EU PRESIDENT, SHARED US CONCERNS ABOUT
THE HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE REFERENDUM ON EVENTUAL UNION
WITH RUSSIA THAT THE TRANSNISTRIAN "SUPREME SOVIET"
RECENTLY ANNOUNCED.

[1](#)3. (C) THE GOF STRONGLY QUESTIONS RUSSIAN MOTIVES AND
THE ROLE MOSCOW HAS PLAYED IN POSSIBLY URGING SMIRNOV
AND THE "SUPREME SOVIET" TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THIS
INITIATIVE, YRJOLA SAID. AT A MINIMUM, THE REFERENDUM
PUTS RUSSIA IN A TREMENDOUSLY AWKWARD AND PROBLEMATIC
POSITION. ACCEPTING ITS RESULTS WOULD FLY IN THE FACE
OF MOSCOW'S LONG-STATED SUPPORT FOR OSCE-AGREED
UNDERSTANDINGS ON BORDER INTEGRITY; MOREOVER, IT WOULD
CALL INTO SERIOUS QUESTION THE TRUTHFULNESS OR
LEGITIMACY OF RUSSIA'S ALLEGED LACK OF TERRITORIAL
AMBITIONS IN TRANSNISTRIA. ONE COULD EVEN ARGUE, SHE
OPINED, THAT SUCH SUPPORT WOULD UNDERMINE THE ARGUMENT
MOSCOW IS INCREASINGLY PUTTING FORWARD REGARDING
KOSOVO'S FINAL STATUS; I.E., THAT INDEPENDENCE WOULD
PROVIDE POLITICAL INCENTIVE AND PERHAPS EVEN A LEGAL

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BASIS FOR OTHER ETHNIC ENCLAVES (ESPECIALLY IN FROZEN
CONFLICTS) TO TAKE UP ARMS OR OTHER ILLEGAL MEANS TO
ACHIEVE INDEPENDENCE. ON THE OTHER HAND, YRJOLA
CONCLUDED, MOSCOWS REJECTION OF THE TRANSNISTRIA
REFERENDUM WOULD SIGNAL A BREAK WITH SMIRNOV SO SHARP AS
TO LACK CREDIBILITY.

14. (C) AS FAR AS AN EU RESPONSE, YRJOLA SAID THAT COUNCIL
AND PRESIDENCY OFFICIALS RAISED THE TRANSNISTRIA REFERENDUM
WITH RUSSIAN PSC AMBASSADOR VLADIMIR CHIZHOV DURING THE PSC
RUSSIA TROIKA MEETINGS ON JULY 14. CHIZHOV DOWNPLAYED THE
REFERENDUM AS "SOMETHING RUSSIA CAN NOT CONTROL" BUT
REAFFIRMED TO THE TROIKA RUSSIA'S COMMITMENT TO MOLDOVA'S
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. SUBSEQUENTLY, YRJOLA REPORTED, THE
FINNISH PRESIDENCY AND THE COUNCIL SECRETARIAT AGREED THAT
THEY WOULD NOT ORGANIZE A FORMAL EU DEMARCHE TO RUSSIA ON
THE ISSUE, BUT AGREED TO BRING IT UP ON THE MARGINS OF
SEVERAL UPCOMING EU-RUSSIA MEETINGS. DEPENDING ON HOW THE
GOR RESPONDS, BOTH THE FINNS AND THE COUNCIL REMAIN OPEN TO
THE POSSIBILITY OF A FORMAL DEMARCHE AS SEPT. 17 NEARS.

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